



A letter to our San Diego community:

You may have seen increased media attention surrounding an investigation into missing drugs that took place at Sharp Grossmont Hospital between July 2012 and June 2013. Given the number of reports that have come out recently and the variations among them, we wanted to explain the situation to you directly, and provide you with accurate information surrounding the events that occurred during that time.

Beginning in 2011, we were alerted that potentially powerful drugs and equipment were missing from the anesthesia cart in each of Sharp Grossmont Hospital's three Women's Center operating rooms. Unauthorized removal or misuse of medication by a doctor or other medical professional can present a threat to patient safety. We would never want to put our patients at risk for this kind of harm.

Our initial efforts to determine the cause of the missing drugs through interviews and other investigative methods were unsuccessful. We then installed a computer monitor with a motion-activated camera in each of the three Women's Center operating rooms. Although the cameras were intended to record only individuals in front of the anesthesia carts, others, including patients and medical personnel in the operating rooms, were at times visible to the cameras and recorded without sound.

The purpose of this investigation was to determine how the anesthesia drugs were going missing in order to ensure patient safety and quality of care. Through the investigation, we were able to identify the individual who we believed was improperly removing the drugs. That individual is no longer affiliated with Sharp HealthCare. The surveillance methods in the 2012-13 investigation were used for that particular case only and have not been used again.

In 2016, a lawsuit alleging privacy violations and other claims stemming from the video recording was filed against Sharp HealthCare and Sharp Grossmont Hospital. Since then, other cases have been filed. The cases remain active and understandably, Sharp is unable to comment further about them.

Sharp HealthCare and Sharp Grossmont Hospital continue to take extensive measures to protect the privacy of our patients. The videos in our possession are kept in a secured safe in our Security Department. We have provided copies of videos to third parties in response to legal processes or specific patient authorizations or requests. Our primary concern has been, and will continue to be, ensuring patient safety and quality of care. We sincerely apologize that our efforts may have caused any distress to the women who were recorded, their families, and others we serve. We can assure you this surveillance method is no longer in use, and we have made changes in our protocols to ensure this situation is not repeated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Howard".

Chris Howard
President and Chief Executive Officer, Sharp HealthCare